



Raising Money on the Web

A Web site is a perfect place to raise money and build support.

BY TERRENCE FERNSLER

Fundraising and Friend-Raising on the Web

*By Adam Corson-Finnerty and Laura Blanchard. 122 pages. Softcover, with CD-ROM.
Chicago and Los Angeles: American Library Association.*

The Web is revolutionizing the way nonprofit organizations do things. Creative use of the Internet can enhance major gift fundraising, attract new constituents, and enhance relations with your current supporters. If you're thinking of creating a Web site or want to raise more money on the site you have, this book is a good place to turn. It provides great ideas for making your Web site usable and exciting and teaches you the basics to implement those ideas.

The Web is especially useful for soliciting and acknowledging major contributions, the authors suggest. If you have a major gift program, your Web building should focus there first, because that's where you'll find the best return for your time and energy investment.

A well-thanked and well-recognized donor is an inspiration to other prospects, and the Web can enhance that process. Your Web page will encourage interaction and relationship-building, which form the heart of a successful fundraising program.

Focus on making your Web site rich with information and involvement, the authors recommend. First get the information up, then build in involvement. As interactivity takes hold, your Web site will become your key to communication.

You can obtain contributions on your Web site through pledges, credit cards, or digital cash, all of which are thoroughly explained in this book. You can also offer products and premiums on-line. Another option is to create a Web-enhanced CD-ROM, which will allow instant downloading. The book provides a step-by-step, easy-to-follow process for doing so.

The authors encourage experimentation with a Web site and give plenty of examples of Web pages that are useful for cultivating contributors. They look at making the site more interactive, adding audio visuals, and incorporating video in your site. Some of their other invaluable tips:

- Keep the home page simple. When the page's primary purpose is navigation, keep it short. When the primary purpose is to deliver content, it can be longer.
- Have a response option on every page.
- Replace "last updated" footers with "this page maintained by [e-mail address]."
- Put your hottest news at the top of your home page.
- Let constituents update their personal information.
- Allow on-line registration for events.

Although the authors say this book is targeted to libraries, it will be useful for any nonprofit organization. Its conciseness and clarity make it an excellent source for any nonprofit wanting to use the Web or wanting to learn to use it better. ■

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